

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-10

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MEXICO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SNAR, MX

SUBJECT: NEWSWEEK ARTICLE "THE MEXICAN CONNECTION"

MARCH 15 ISSUE OF NEWSWEEK CARRIED ARTICLE "THE MEXICAN CONNECTION" BY SANDRA SALMONS, ANTHONY MARRO AND WILLIAM SCHMIDT, WHICH YOU ARE RECEIVING BY USIS WIRELESS. FOLLOWING IS GUIDANCE PREPARED FOR DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN TO BE USED ON AN IF ASKED BASIS:

QUOTE:

NOON PRESS BRIEFING (IF ASKED)

SUBJECT: NEWSWEEK (MARCH 15) ARTICLE ON FLOW OF HEROIN FROM MEXICO:

"THE MEXICAN CONNECTION"

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Q: NEWSWEEK'S ARTICLE ON THE MEXICAN CONNECTION IMPLIES

THAT ALL OUR EFFORTS TO LEAN ON THE MEXICANS TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE DRUG FLOW, AND ALL OUR ASSISTANCE, IS FOR NAUGHT: WHAT'S BEEN ACCOMPLISHED?

A: FIRST, WE ARE NOT "LEANING" ON THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT. U.S. GOVERNMENT TECHNICAL AND MATERIAL ASSISTANCE

WAS REQUESTED TO HELP MEXICO CONTROL THE DRUG PROBLEM. AN AWARENESS OF THE INCREASING THREAT TO MEXICO'S OWN SOCIETY PROMPTED THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT TO INTENSIFY ITS EFFORTS.

SECONDLY, THE LAST REPORT FROM MEXICO INDICATES THAT OVER 12,000 OPIUM POPPY FIELDS, WHICH COULD HAVE YIELDED AS MUCH AS SIX TONS OF HEROIN, HAVE BEEN DESTROYED. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN SUBSTANTIAL SEIZURES OF REFINED HEROIN AND UNPROCESSED OPIUM GUM, ALL OF WHICH CUTS OFF SUPPLIES OF THE DRUG TO THE U.S. MARKET.

Q: NEWSWEEK CLAIMS THERE ARE 30 DEA (DRUG ENFORCEMENT ADMINISTRATION) AGENTS IN MEXICO, WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

A: DEA IS IN MEXICO AT THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT'S INVITATION, TO EXCHANGE INTELLIGENCE ON TRAFFICKERS, TRAFFICKING ROUTES, ETC., AND TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

Q: IF THEY ARE ONLY "EXCHANGING INFORMATION," WHY HAVE SEVERAL BEEN WOUNDED?

A: DEA AGENTS WORK CLOSELY AND DAY-TO-DAY WITH THE MEXICAN FEDERAL POLICE WHICH OFTEN REQUIRES THEM TO TRAVEL TO THE FIELD, WHERE MEXICAN POLICE, AND HENCE DEA PERSONNEL ALSO, ARE EXPOSED TO HOSTILE ACTION FROM TRAFFICKERS. OF THE FOUR REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN WOUNDED, THREE WERE STATIONED IN U.S. CITIES AND WERE IN MEXICO AT THE REQUEST OF THE MEXICAN POLICE. UNQUOTE.

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